

Herbert.
**A RIGHT COM-
FORTABLE TREA-
TISE CONTAINING**
fourteene pointes of consolation for
them that labor and are laden:

WRITTEN BY D. MARTIN
*Luther to Prince Friderik Duke of Saxonie, he be-
ing sore sicke, thereby to comfort him in the time of
his great distresse.*

Englified by W. GACE.



Imprinted at London by Thomas
Vautrollier dwelling in the
Blacke Friers.

1578.

4. p. 354. 182

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W. p. 1070.

Martin Luther.

I Did write this booke in the beginning of my proceedings, to the most gracious Prince Fride-rik Duke of Saxony, when he was sore sicke. Now many thought good that it should be imprinted, but when it had bene eftsones imprinted, it was so corrupted and made vnperfect, that I found many wordes wanting, which I my selfe could not coniecture what they were: howbeit the sentences I haue restored after a sort, and such as I thinke I had in the beginning. Neither haue I thought it good now to chaunge or adorne them as I could: For I will in this booke shewe a testimonie of my proceeding, and gratifie the aduersaries, that they may haue wherewith to exercise their malice. It is sufficient for me if I please my Lord Christ & his Sainctes: I reioyce from my hart, and giue thanks to my God, that I am enuied and hated of the deuill and his Impes.





TO THE VVOR- SHIPFULL M. HENRIE DALE CITIZEN AND MAR-

*chant of the citie of London, VV. Gace wi-
sheth grace and peace from God
the Father through Christ
Iesus our Lord.*



Anifold are the miseries of mans life, wherewith he is greatly grieued and sundry wayes molested, insomuch as Iob sayth that man that is borne of a woman hathe but a short time to live, and is replenished with miserie. For he beginneth his life with teares & weeping, he passeth it with sorrow & trouble, and endeth it with dolour and payne. Wherefore it is no maruell if some haue thought that it is the best thinge not to be borne, and the next to dye quickly: and that other some haue mourned and wept at the birthes of their friendes, and solemnly reioyced at their burialls. For what could they being destitute of the light of God and true religion, see in this life but trouble & miserie? Yea the godly themselves, as they haue in all ages suffered many afflictions in this life, so haue they passed through the same

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as through a straunge countrie . For if heauen be our countrie , what is the earth els but a place of banishment? wherein being exiled from true delights and pleasures , we liue in a state vnquiet, troublesom, and many wayes miserable, as to him that shall duely consider the sundry troubles that are incident to all sortes of men in this life, wil easily appeare.

Forasmuch then as this life is so miserable , as both the Saints of God haue pronounced of it, the very heathen haue accounted it, & daily experience proueth it, & yet neuerthelesse we, seeing God hath placed vs in it, must remaine therein till he call vs away: great neede we haue of such consolation & encouragement as may be a meane to make vs passe the time thereof without grudging & impatiencie. For of our selues we are very fraile & weake, not able to resist, much lesse of power to ouercome, as is manifest by them, who in the time of affliction haue through impaciencie murmured against God, albeit there both haue bene, and are many, who being not of them selues but by other meanes supported, haue patiently sustained many troubles and miseries.

Wherefore I trust that my labor shall not be thought ill bestowed , but rather profitably employed, which I haue taken in translating this treatise into the Englishe tongue, for that it tendeth chiefly to the consolation of such as are in affliction and distresse . For that which the title of this booke portendeth, the matter thereof sufficiently proueth , namely that it containeth consolations for them that labor and are laden, that is, that suffer

DEDICATORIE.

fer afflictions and troubles in this life: so that they which shall diligently read and peruse the same, may be so confirmed thereby, that when they be troubled with hardnes of aduersitie, they may not be ouercome or throwne downe therewith: when they be molested with griefe & sorrow, they may be also delited with spirituall ioy: when they be euen distressed with troubles and afflictions, they may receiue courage againe, being cheared with fundry consolations, & so patiently suffer according to Gods will whatsoeuer it shall please him to lay vpon them.

Howe great this commoditie is, it plainly appeareth not onely by this, that the feelinge of the present affliction is thereby asswaged, but by this also, that it is a meane to moue and make vs to obey Gods will, which otherwise we woulde be readye to resist, and to suffer patiently, whereas otherwise we woulde by impatience be stubborne agaynste the righteousnes of God.

Wherefore forasmuche as I am not ignoraunt that the crosse is vsually incident to the godly, and that through many afflictions we must enter into the kingdome of God, I am bolde to commend this treatise to all the godly in generall, to be read of them to their singular commoditie and comfort, but especially to your worshippe, whose godly conuersation both of a longe tyme hath bene, and dayly is an euident testimonie of your sincere and vnfeyned profession of Christe his religion: desiringe you to esteeme thereof, not accordinge to the quantitie or

THE EPISTLE DEDICAT.

outward appearance (for then shall you make but small account of it, being both litle in quantitie, & adorned with no eloquent tearmes or glorious wordes) but according to the frute that the godly shall reape by diligent reading therof. For pearles and precious stones for the most part are in quantitie but small, and in outward appearance simple, which in value notwithstanding are great and in vertue excellent. Howbeit being sufficiently perswaded of your well accepting hereof, I will not stand vpon this point, lest I shoulde seeme in any wise to dout of it, but doe desire Almighty God, that as you haue hitherto liued in his feare, so ye may dayly increase, and constantly continue in the same
euen vnto the ende.

Your vvorships at commaundement

W. GACE.

TO



TO THE MOST FAMOUS PRINCE AND

LORD, THE LORD FRIDERIK,

Duke of Saxonie, &c, his very good

Lord.



*V*R Lorde and Sauour Iesus hathe
left a commaundement which pertaineth
indifferently to all Christians, that
we should performe the duties of hu-
manitie, or rather (as the Scripture
calleth them) the workes of mercy to the afflicted and
miserable: that we should visit the sicke, endeuour to
deliuer the captiues, and doe such like to our neigh-
bour, whereby the present euills may be somewhat as-
swaged. Hereof our Lord Iesus Christ hath in him selfe
set forth vnto vs a most manifest & singular example,
wheras of his exceeding loue toward mankind, he came
downe from the bosom of the father into our miseries
and into our prison, that is, into our flesh and most mi-
serable life, and tooke the punishment of our sinnes vp-
on him selfe, that we might be saued: according as E-
sai sayth chap. 43: Thou hast laden me with thy sinnes,
and wearied me with thy vngodlines, &c. If there be
any whom this so manifest & singular an example doth
not stirre vp, and the authoritie of Gods commaunde-

ment added therunto doth not moue to performe these workes of charitie, surely he shall worthely in the last iudgement heare the voice of the angrie Iudge: Goe thou cursed into euerlasting fire. For I was sicke and thou didst not visit me, but being altogether unthankfull for the exceeding benefits which I bestowed on thee and all the world, thou didst not euen in the most slender duties relieue or helpe thy brethren, no nor me Christ in my brethren.

Forasmuch therefore most famous Prince, as I see your Grace to be sore sicke, and that Christ also is sicke in you, I haue thought it my dutie to visit your Grace by writing somewhat vnto you. For I can not dissemble, that I doe not heare the voice of Christ out of your Graces body and fleshe crying to me, and saying: Behold I am sicke here. For these euills, namely sicknes and such like, not we Christians onely, but Christ himselfe also our Lord and Sauour, in whom we liue, doth suffer, as he manifestly witnesseth in the Gospell: Whatsoeuer ye doe to the least of mine, ye doe it vnto me. Nowe although we owe this duetie to all that are sicke in generall, that we doe visit and comfort them, yet doe we owe it chiefly to them that be of the household of faith. For Paule doth plainly distinguish betweene aliens, and them that professe the same faith with vs, or with whome we haue some alliance. Galat. 6.

Howbeit I haue other reasons also of my duetie. For I know that I as one of your Graces subiectes, together with the rest of your subiectes ought to be moued with your Graces sicknes, and to be as it were sicke together with you, as the member with the head, in whom all our good estate, safetie, and prosperitie consisteth. For we
acknow-

acknowledge your Grace to be as a certain Naamã by whom God at this day giueth health to Germanie, as in time past by him he gaue health to Syria. VVherefore euen the whole Romane Empire hath your Grace in admiration, doth reuerence and honour you as a father of the countrie, as a singular ornament and safeguard of the whole Empire, but especially of the Germane nation.

Neither do we owe this only to your Grace, to comfort you as much as we are able, and as it were to beare the present case with you, but much rather to pray vnto God for your health and reuerie: which I hope is done with all diligence and endeuour of your Graces subiectes. As for my selfe, whom many notable benefits and pleasures haue made a dettow to your Grace more then the rest, I acknowledge that I ought by some singular duetie to declare my thankfulnes. But because in this splendernes of abilitie and power, I am able to performe no notable thinge, D. George Spalatine, who is your Graces Chaplen, aduertized me that I shoulde doe well to make some spirituall consolation & send it to your Grace, for that that would be a thing very acceptable vnto you. VVherefore I thought it not good to doe contrary to the aduertizement of my frende, and therefore haue I gathered together these fourteene chapters, being comprised as it were in a table, and haue intituled them * Tessaradecas, that they might be in steele of fourteene Sainctes which our superstition made and called the driuers away of all euills. Howbeit this is not a siluer but a spirituall table, where with, not the walls of temples are to be adorned, but the godly mind is to be comforted and confirmed. And I hope that it will be very profitable to your Grace in

* That is, fourteen, or that which consisteth of that number.

this present state. Nowe it is diuided into two partes,
whereof the former contayneth seuen considerations of
euills, whereby the present griefes and troubles are mi-
igated and asswaged. The latter containeth likewise
seuen considerations of good thinges tending to the
same ende. Wherefore I desire your Grace to take this
my simple labour in good parte, which I pray God
ye may so enioy, that by diligent reading
and consideration of this trea-
tise ye may haue some ease.

I humbly commend me
to your Grace.

Your humble and obedient sub-
iect MARTIN LUTHER.

THE

THE PREFACE.



He Apostle Paul in the 15. chapter of his Epistle to the Romanes speaking of christian comfort, sayth: Brethren, VVhatsoever things haue ben written afore time, were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures might haue hope. VVhereby he plainly teacheth that our comforts must be taken out of the holy Scriptures. Nowe the holy Scriptures vse two sortes of comfort, inasmuch as they commend vnto vs the consideration of two sortes of things, namely of euill things and of good things, according as the wise man sayth: In the day of affliction remember prosperitie: & in the day of prosperitie be mindful of affliction. For the holy Ghost knoweth that every thing is of such sort & so great to man, of what sort and how great his opinion is thereof. For that which is counted vile & nothing esteemed, doth litle moue, either with loue if it come, or with grieve if it depart. VVherefore he laboureth most earnestly

THE PREFACE.

to call man from the opinion & affection of things, which vwhen he hath brought to passe, all things are then indifferent. Nowve forasmuch as this calling is done especially by the vvorde, vvhereby the opinion is transferred from the thing, vvwhich is presently felt to the thing vvwhich either is absent or not presently felt, it is by good reason that vve shall haue no cōfort but by the Scripture, which in the day of affliction calleth vs to the consideration of prosperitie, vvwhich is either present or to come: also in the day of prosperitie calleth vs to consider affliction. But that these considerations may be more easie vnto vs, vve vvill diuide either of them into seuen partes. To the former shall be referred the euills vvwhich are to be considered of a man: First vvithin him selfe: Secondly before him: Thirdly behind him: Fourthly beneath him: Fifthly on the left hande: Sixtly on the right hand: Seuenthly aboue him.

THE

I

THE FIRST CHAP- TER OF THE FIRST CON- sideration, which is of the in- ward euil.



His is certaine and mosse true, whether man beleue it or not, that there can be none so great trouble & vexation in man, which is the worst of the euills which are in him, so many moe and greater euills are there in him then which he feeleth. For if he felt his euill, he should feele euen hell: for he hath hel in him self. Dooſt thou demaund, how? *Man hath hell in him selfe, which is the greatest euill in him.* The Prophet sayth: All men are lyars. And againe: Euery man liuing is altogither vanitie. Now to be a lyar and vaine is to be boyd of veritie, & not to be in deed: but to be without veritie, and not to be in deede, is to be without God, and to be nothing: and this is to be in hell, and to be condemned. Therefore God mercifully chastening vs, openeth vnto vs and layeth vpon vs the smaller & lighter euills, knowing, that if he should bring man to his knowledge of his euill, he should forthwith pe-

rish in a moment: howbeit he hath giuen it to some to haue a feeling and taste of it, of whome it is sayd: He bringeth downe to the graue, and fetcheth vp againe. Wherefore they say rightly who cal corporal sufferings certaine aduertizements of the inward euill. And the Apostle Heb. 12 calleth them y^e fatherly chastenings of God, saying: He scourgeth euery sonne that he receiueth. Which he therefore doth, that by these scourges and small euills he may expell those great euills, least we should at any time feele them, as it is sayd Proverb. 22: Foolishnes is bound in the hart of the child, and the rod of correction shall driue it away. Are not godly parents also more griued by their childre if they be theeues or euill, then if they be wounded? yea they doe them selues beat and wound them that they may not be euill.

Why God scourgeth euery sonne whom he receiueth.

God suffereth not mā to feele his greatest euill, and why.

What therefore is the cause that this very euil is not felt? truely as I haue said, God disposing it it commeth so to passe, that man may not be vtterly discouraged, if he should see his most inward euils. For God hideth them, and will haue them seene by only faith, while he sheweth them
by

That labor and are laden. 3

by the euill that is felt. Therefore in the day of affliction or when thou sufferest euill thinges, remember good thinges: consider howe great a good thinge it is not to know all the euill, be mindfull of this good thinge, and the euill which thou feelest shal lesse disquiet or trouble thee. So againe in the day when thou enioyest good thinges, remember euill things, that is, while thou art not griued with those that be very euills in deede, in this want of grieffe be thankfull, and remember the very euills, then will it come to passe that thou shalt lesse feele the euill that is felt.

It is manifest therefore that the want of grieffe is alwayes greater in man in this life, then grieffe, not for that the whole euill is not present, but because there is no opinion or affection thereof by the goodnes of God, who hideth it. Hereupon we see them to whom it is giuen to behold their very euill, howe rigorous and cruell they are against them selues, howe they count it nothing whatsoeuer they can suffer in their whole life, so as they feele not their hel. So would euery one doe, if he either felt or firmly beleued his inward e-

4 Consolations for them

euill: he would of his owne accord call for outward euills, he would sport in them, & would neuer be more sad or sorrowfull, then when he had no euills, as we know some of the Sainctes to haue done.

The comfort of the first consideration.

Wherefore in the first comfortable consideration, a man may say to him self: thou doost not yet, O man, feele thine euill, reioyce and giue thanks, that thou art not compeld to feele it: and so a small euill being compared with one that is very great, shall be made light and easie. This is that which some saye: I haue deserued farre worse things, yea euen hel it selfe: an easie thing surely to be spoken, but intolerable to be felt. And this euill albeit it be hid, yet doth it shew forth his frutes sufficiēt grievous: these are feare and the vncertainty of a trembling conscience, whereby faith is impugned, whiles man knoweth not or douteth whether he hath God fauorable vnto him, which frute is so much more bitter as faith is weaker. And this only infirmie being wel weped, forasmuch as it is spiritual, is farre more grievous then that of the body, which it doth make euen most light, being diligently compared vnto it.

Frutes of the greatest euill which is in man.

Beside

That labor and are laden. 5

Beside these, to the inward evils pertaineth all that tragedy, which the Preacher describeth, whereas he so often maketh mention of vanitie and affliction of the spirit. For how many counsels doe we take in vaine? how many of our desires are frustrate? how many things doe we see, how many things do we heare which we would not? Euen those things which tende to our desire, fall out contrary to our desire, so that there is nothing entire and perfect. Moreover all these things are so much greater as one is placed in higher place or state, who must needs be roff with farre more and greater scourges, waues, & tempests, then the rest that are troubled with the same thinge, so that the 103. Psalmie sayth well: small and great beastes, and thinges creeping innumerable, are in the sea of this worlde, that is, infinite sortes of tentacions, wherefore Job chap. 7. calleth the life of man a tentation. Now these are not therefore no evils because they are litle felt, but because thzough vse and daily custome they are nothing accounted of, and affliction & opinion in these is worne out, by the worke of God: wherefore those that

6. Consolations for them

be rare doe rather moue, which as yet we haue by no vse learned to contemne. So that it is true, that we doe feele scarce the thousandth part of our euills: it is also true that our euills are measured, felt, or not felt, not by the veritie of the thinge, but by our opinion and affection.

The second chapter of the second consideration, which is of the euill to come or before a man.

*Feare what
it is.*

*The euill to
come.*

It will not a litle lighten euery present euill, if thou turne thy mind to them that are to come, which are so many, such, & so great, that hereunto alone is referred that great and one of the principall affections which is called feare, which some define to be an affection of the euill to come, according as the Apostle saith Rom. 11: Be not hie minded but feare. This euill is so much greater, as it is moze vncertaine, of what sort and how great it wilbe when it come, so that it is a common saying: There is no age to whom y^e scabb may not come, which notwithstanding is an euill that is wont to happen to chilozen and infants. So that no
man

That labor and are laden. 7

man is free and exempt from any euills of any man, but whatsoeuer one man suffereth, the same also may another suffer.

This is verified by the histories & tragedies of all ages, by all the complaints of the whole world: by more then three hundred sorts of diseases, whereby mans body may be troubled, as some haue well noted. If there be so many diseases, how many other il chaunces thinkest thou wil there be of other thinges, of frendes, finally of the minde it selfe, which is the principall subject of all euills, and the onely receptacle of sorrow and euills?

Moreouer the force & feeling of euills is so much more increased, by howe much the state is greater & more worthy, whē as povertie, ignominie, & all il chaunces, seeing that they may euen sodenly come, must needes, forasmuch as all thinges hange as it were by a slender thread, be feared euery howe, no otherwise then that sworde, which Dionyse the tyrann hoonge ouer the head of his guest. Now whatsoeuer of these do not come, it is to be counted for aduantage, & for no smal cōfort against that euill that chaunceth, so that thou art here com-

*It ought
greatly to
comfort vs,
& moue vs
to loue and
praise God,*

B li.

that we be-
ing in dan-
ger of so
many evils,
few or none
come vnto
vs.

Death the
most terri-
ble & most
certaine e-
uill to come,
yet the time
of the com-
ming ther-
of most vn-
certaine.

pelled to say with Ieremie: it is through the mercies of y^e Lorde that we are not destroyed. For whatsoeuer of them doth not chaunce, it chaunceth not, the right hand of y^e Highest letting or prohibiting it, which mightely p^reserueth vs on euery side as it is declared in Iob, so that Satan and euils doe euen grudge and beare it vnpatiently that they are letted and prohibited. Wherefore we see, how sweetely the Lord is to be loued, as often as any thing chaunceth vnto vs, soasmuch as by this one euil our most louing father admonisheth vs to consider howe many euils are ready to assaile vs, if he did not stay and let them: as if he sayd: Satan and a huge heape of euills desire to siffe thee: but I haue set boundes to the sea, and haue sayd vnto it, hitherto shall thy swelling waues come, and here shall they stay, as he sayth in Iob chap. 28. But none of them shall come, perhaps the will of God being so: howbeit that which of all terrible things is sayd to be the greatest, namely death, shall most certainly come, and nothing is more vncertaine then the hower thereof. Which euil is so great, that we see that many men had rather liue
even

That labor and are laden. 9

even with all the foresayd evils, then they being ended to dye once. And to this one the Scripture also, wheras it contemneth the rest, referreth feare, saying: Remember the end and thou shalt neuer do amisse.

Consider how many meditations, how many bookes, how many meanes and remedies are ordained hereunto, so that with the remembrance of this onely euill it is vsual to fray men from sinnes, and make the world contemptible, to lighten sufferings and euills, and to comfort the afflicted by comparing their euills with so horrible & great an euill, which shall at one time or other of necessitie come. There is no man, who would not wish to suffer all euills, if thereby he might auoide the euill of death. This the Sainctes also haue feared: this Christ suffered with feare and sweat like dropps of blood. So that the diuine mercy hath bene careful to strengthen & comfort the weake & faint harted in nothing more then in this euill as we shall see hereafter.

As for Christians they haue a speciall and proper cause to feare the euill to come, which exceedeth all the other euils: this is that which y^e Apostle setteth forth I. Cor.

B iii.

*What euil
to come
Christians
ought to
feare.*

10 Consolations for them

10. saying: Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heede lest he fall. So slipperie is the way, so mighty is the enemy, being armed with our owne proper strength (that is, with the aydes of the flesh & of all euill affections) accompanied wth infinite bands & companies of the world, with delights & pleasures on the right hand, with troubles & the euill wils of men on y^e left; beside that art, a thousand wayes to hurt, seduce, & destroy, whereof he is most skillfull. We liue so that we are not sure of our good purpose so much as a moment. Cyprian speaking of many such things in his epistle of mortalitie, teacheth that death is to be wished as a speedy helper to auoyde these euils.

*True Christians con-
tinue death,
& all euils,
that they
may be de-
liuered fro
the euill of
sinne.*

And for the most part where men haue a good hart, & duely reuolue in their minde these infinite perils, we see them, despising life and death, that is all the aforesaide euills, wish to be losed, that they may be also losed from this euill of sinnes wherein they are, as we haue sayd in the first chapter, and into which they may fall, whereof we speake now. And surely these are two most weighty reasons, to moue vs not onely to wish for death, but also to contemne all

That labor and are laden. 11

all euills, not to beare one euil onely lightly, if the Lorde shall giue to any to be moued with them, for it is the gift of God to be moued with them. For what true Christian will not wish euen to dye, and not onely to be sicke, who seeth and feeleth, that he while he liueth in healt he, is not onely in sinnes, and continually may and daily doth fall into moe, and so without intermission doth contrary to the moste louing will of his most louing Father? With this vehemencie of indignation Paule beinge moued (as it is declared Rom. 7.) when he had complayned that he did not the good which he woulde, but the euill which he would not, cryed out: O wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer me from the bode of this death? The grace of God sayth he by Iesus Christ, &c. He liue loueth God his Father, who doth not choose rather the euill of death, then this euill of sinning, seing that he hath ordayned death hereunto that this euil may at the last haue an ende, and death may be the minister of life and righteousness, whereof shal be spoken hereafter.

B iiii.

The third chapter of the third consideration, which is of the euill past or behind vs.

*We shall
then chiefly
perceiue
the goodnes
of God to-
ward vs, &
the care
which he
hath ouer
vs, when we
cōsider our
life past.*

Herein moze then in þ rest notably shi-
neth the sweete mercye of God the fa-
ther, which is able to comfort vs in all our
distresse. For euery man neuer feelethe the
hand of God moze p̄sent vpon him, then
when he calleth to minde the yeaeres of his
life past. Sainct Augustine saith: If a man
should choose either to dye, or to leade a-
gaine his life past, he would choose rather
to die, considering so great perills & euils,
which he hath scarce and hardely auoided.
Which saying is most true, if it be well &
duely weyed. For here a man may see, how
often he hath without his owne studey,
without his owne care, yea without and
contrary to his desire, done and suffered
many thinges, whereof he did not so much
as thinke befoze they were done, or in do-
ing, that the worke being ended, he is then
first compelled to say: Howe hath it come
to passe that I haue done these thinges,
which I did not thinke on, or thought of o-
ther

ther thinges? so that the pꝛouerbe is true:
Man purposeth, but God disposeth, that
is, altereth, and bꝛingeth to passe an other
thinge then man purposeth, that euen in
this one thinge we can not denie, that our
life and actions are gouerned & directed,
not by our owne wisdom, but by the mar-
uelous power, counsel, & goodnes of God.
Hereby we perceiue howe often God hath
bene wth vs, when we neither saw nor felt it,
and how truely Peter sayd: Cast all your
care on him, for he careth for you.

Wherefoꝛe if there were no bookes nor
sermons, yet our life it selfe led thꝛough so
many euills and perills, if it be well consi-
dered, doth abundantly commend the good-
nes of God to be pꝛesent with vs, & most
sweete vnto vs, who hath farre otherwise
then we either thought oꝛ felt, boꝛne vs as
it were in his bosome, and as Moses sayth
Deut. 32: The Lord hath kept him as the
apple of his eye, he hath led him about, and
caried him on his shoulders. And hereun-
on came those sayinges in the Psalter: I
remember the time past, I meditate in all
thy woꝛks, yea I do meditate in the woꝛks
of thy handes: I will remember the won-

14 Consolations for them

*We ought
greatly to
be comforted
in the
present euil
when we cō
sider from
how many
euills God
hath prefer
ued vs in
our life past*

ders of olde: And againe: I remembred
thy iudgements of old, and haue bene com-
forted. All these and such like tende to this
ende, that we shoulde knowe, that if we see
that God was then p̄sent with vs, when
we did not thinke thereof, neither he did
seeme to be p̄sent, we shoulde not doubt
that he is nowe also p̄sent, when he see-
meth vnto vs to be absent. For he that pro-
tected and p̄serued vs in many necessi-
ties without our owne care or thinkinge
thereof, he I saye will not forsake vs in a
small matter although he seeme to forsake
vs, according as he sayth in Esai: A litle
while haue I forsaken thee, but with great
mercifulnes shall I take thee vnto me.
Hereunto thou mayst adde: Who hath had
care of vs so many nightes when we slept?
who was carefull for vs as often as we la-
bozed, plaid, and did infinite other things,
wherein we were nothing carefull for our
selues?

*Why God
leaueth vs
sometime to
our owne
care, he him*

So we see how al our care, whether we
will or no, must be referred to God alone,
we being very seldom left to our owne cou-
sell or care, which notwithstanding y^e Lord
sometime doth, that he may teach vs to ac-
knowledge

That labor and are laden. 15

knowledge his goodnes, that we may perceiue howe much difference there is betweene his care and ours. Wherefore he sometime suffereth some light sickness or other euil to come vnto vs, making semblance y^e he hath no care of vs (for in deede there is no time whē he careth not for vs) notwithstanding he doth in the meane season prohibit & let, that so many euils as are ready to assaile vs, do not together on euery side come violently vpon vs, that he may try vs as most deare children whether we will commit our selues to his care being knowne of vs through all y^e rest of our life, & marke how vnprofitable & impotent our owne care is. For what doe we profit our selues, or what can we profit our selues in all our life, who in a litle while can not cure & remedie one onely payne of the legge?

Why then are we so careful in the point of one perill or euill, and doe not leaue the care to him, when as our life it selfe being witnes, we are kept and preserved in so many euils without our owne labour or trauel? To know & duely to consider these things, is to know y^e works of God, to meditate in his workes, & by y^e remembrance

selfe seeing not to care for vs.

16 Consolations for them

of them to be comforted in aduersitie and troubles: But they that are ignozant here- of shall fall into that which is mentioned psal. 29. Because they haue not vnder- stood the workes of the Lord, nor the ope- ration of his handes, thou shalt breake them downe, and not build them vp. For they are vnthankful for all the care which God hath taken for them in all their life, who do not commit the care of them selues to him for a litle while.

The fourth chapter of the fourth confide-
ration, which is of the euill be-
neath vs.

AS yet we haue seene no other in all the euills which we suffer, but that y^e good- nes of God is so great, and so present with vs, that among innumerable euills, where- with we are compassed in this life, & wher- in we are euen imprisoned, scarce a very few, and those not at all times are suffered to assaile vs, so that every present euill wherewith we are troubled, is but an ad- uertizement of certaine great aduantage, which we haue through the goodnes of
God,

God, whiles that he suffereth vs not to be oppzessed with y^e multitude of euills wherewith we are compassed. For it is a miracle, if one be assailed with infinit blowes, & be touched but with one alone, yea it is a grace that he is not stricken with all, a miracle that he is not stricken with many.

Nowe the first of the euills that are beneath vs, is death, the second, hell. If we consider the shamefull and vile death of others, wherewith sinners are punished, we shall easily perceiue with howe great aduantage we suffer lesse then we haue deserued. For how many are hanged, drowned, or stricken with the sword, which perhappes haue done farre lesser sinnes then we, so that their death and miserie is sette befoze vs of Christ as a glasse, wherein we maye see what we haue deserued: as Luke 13. when certaine shewed him of the Galileans, whose bloode Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, he answered: suppose ye that these Galileans were greater sinners then the other Galileans, because they haue suffered suche thinges? I tell you, nay: but except ye amend your liues, ye shal all likewise perish. Or thinke

The euills beneath vs what they are, & how we may take comfort by the consideration of the first of them.

you that those eightene, vpon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slue them, were sinners aboue all men that dwell in Ierusalem? I tel you, nay: but except ye amend your liues, ye shal all likewise perish. For we may not thinke that lesser euils are due vnto vs, who haue committed greater or like sinnes. Neither will the iustice and truch of God be vniust & false for vs, who hath determined to giue to euery man according to his deedes.

*How we
may take
comfort by
consi-
deration of
the second
euill be-
neath vs.*

Moreouer, in hell, & eternal damnation howe many thousand are there, who haue not committed the thousandth part of our sinnes? how many virgins are there, children, & they whom we call innocents? how many religious men, Priestes, &c. who in their whole life seemed to serue God, & perhaps through some one fall are punished for euer? Here must be no dissembling: the iustice of God is y^e same in euery sinne, he hateth & condermeth sinne alike in whomsoever it be found. Doe we not here see the inestimable mercy of God, which hath not condemned them who haue so often deserued it? Howe muche, I praye you, is it which we can suffer euen in all our life, in respect

That labor and are laden. 19

respect of the eternall punishment, which they suffer hauing deserued it perhaps by one offence, we in the meane time being free, and saued from many sinnes which God passeth ouer and remitteth? Whereas we do not regard these benefits of God, or make light account of them, it is through vnthankfulness & a certaine senseles hardness of incredulitie.

Hereunto mozeouer are to be referred so many Infidels, Gentiles, Jewes, vnto whom if those things had ben giuen which are giuen to vs, they had bene, not in hell, but in heauen, and had farre lesse sinned. Examples hereof Christ setteth before our eyes Matth. 11. saying: Wo be to thee Cozazin: Wo be to thee Bethsaida: for if the greate woorkes which were done in you, had bene done in Tyrus and Sidon, they had repented long ago in sackcloth & ashes: but I say to you, it shalbe easier for Tyrus & Sidon at the day of iudgement, then for you. And thou Capernaum which art lifted vp vnto heauen, shalt be brought downe to hell: for if the greate woorkes which haue bene done in thee, had bene done among them of Sodom, they had re-

20 Consolations for them

mained to this day: but I say vnto you, that it shal be ealier for them of the land of Sodom in the day of iudgement, then for thee. We see therefore what great praise & loue we owe to our most gracious God, in euery euill of this life, for that we cast scarce of one drop of them which we haue deserued, which Job compareth to the sea, and to the sande of the sea.

The fift chapter of the fift consideration, which is of the euill on the left hand.

*The first
comfort
which the
considera-
tion of the
euill on the
left hand
ministresh
vnto vs.*

Here we must set before our eyes that great companie of aduersaries and euill men, & in them we must first consider, that they haue not done that euil to our body, substance, fame, soules, which they would haue done, but that God did stay and let them: and the higher calling and state that one is placed in, to so many more deceits, subtle deuises, sclaunders and troubles of the aduersaries is he subiect, in all which he may perceiue & feele the present hande of God. What maruell is it then if we be sometime touched with some one?

Secondly their owne euills are to be
con-

considered of vs also, not that we should re-
 ioice at them, but that we should haue com-
 passion on them. Nowe they also are sub-
 iect to all the same euils, whereunto we are
 subiect, as it may be easily perceiued by the
 former cōsiderations. Howbeit herein they
 are moze miserable then we, that they are
 out of our societie, as well corporall as spi-
 ritual. For this euil which we suffer is no-
 thing in comparison of that, that they liue
 in sinnes, in infidelitie, vnder the wrath of
 God, vnder the dominion of the deuil, most
 miserable slaues of vngodlines and sinne,
 so that if the whole worlde shoulde curse
 them, it coulde wishe them no worse. All
 which if we doe thoroughly perceiue, we
 shall also perceiue, with how great fauour
 and blessing of God we, liuing in faith, in
 the kingdome of Christ, in the seruice of
 God, do suffer some litle euill of the body,
 which in so great plentie of most excellent
 thinges, should not be so much as felt: yea
 their miserie ought to be so grieuous to
 him that hath a Christian and godly hart,
 that he should thinke his owne griefes de-
 lightes. For so Paule willeth Philip. 2:
 Looke not euery man on his owne things,

*The second
 comfort
 which we
 may take
 by conside-
 ring the e-
 uill on the
 left hand.*

but euery man on the things of other men. Let the same minde be in you, that was euen in Christ Iesus, who being in þe forme of God, tooke on him the forme of a seruant, &c. That is, with most louing affection he tooke on him our forme, behauing him selfe no otherwise in our euills, then if they had bene his owne, so, as it were forgetting his owne good thinges, and making him selfe of no reputation, that he might be found altogether made like vnto men, refusing to be subiect to no humane thinge, being occupied onely in our euills.

The Saincts being animated by this affection, and by this example stirred vp, are wont to pray euen for the euills of their enemies, & to do all things according to the example of Christ, & forgetting their owne iniuries or righteousness, to be careful how they may deliuer them from their euills, wherwith they are wout comparison more troubled then wth their owne, as Peter writeth of Lot 2. Pet. 2. who dwelled among them, which vexed his righteous soule from day to day wth their vnlawfull deedes.

Thou seest therefore how deepe a pit of euils here appeareth, & that we haue occasion

That labor and are laden. 23

sion to take pity and compassion, & to forget our owne small euil, if the loue of God be in vs: thou seest also how litle God permitteth vs to suffer in respect of those thinges which they suffer. But whereas *Why the* these things do litle moue vs, the cause is, *euills of our* for that the eye of the hart is not sufficient *aduersaries* cleare, whereby we should see how great *and euill* ignominie and miserie of man is lying vnder sinne, that is, being separate from *men do litle* God, & in subiection vnder the deuill. For *wone vs.* who is so harde harted, which is not greatly moued with pitie and compassion at the miserable sight of them that lye in the porches of Churches, & in the streetes, their faces being gnawne, their noses and eyes eaten with corruption, and their other members wasted with filth and rottennes, so that the mind detesteth to thinke therof, much lesse can y^e eie abide to behold it. But what doth God intend and purpose by these miserable creatures, who haue like flesh as we haue, & are our b^reth^re like vnto vs, but that he may open the eies of our mind, whereby we may see in how moze oughly a sort the filth and corruption of the soule of a sinner appeareth, albeit he weare

C ii.

purple and gold, roses & lillies, as though he were a child of Paradise. But how many sinners are there in the world, to one of them whose bodies are full of sores?

*Euill men
euen in re-
spect of our
ward euills
are in worse
case then
the godly.*

Now these euills which are infinite as well in greatnes as in multitude, being contemned or not regarded in our neighbours, this contempt is the cause that our owne euill being euen one of the least sort, seemeth vnto vs to be very great, and that we thinke that no other are troubled with the like. But it must needes be that euen in outwarde euills also they are in worse case then we. What, I pray you, can be delightfull or thoroughly pleasant vnto them, albeit they haue and enioy all thinges that they desire, when as their conscience can not be quiet? Is there a moze grieuous euill then the trouble of a stinging conscience? For Esai sayth chap. 57: The wicked are like the raginge sea that can not rest, whose water someth with the myze and grauell: euen so the wicked haue no peace sayth God. Wherefore thou mayst see that verified in them which is witten Deut. 28: The Lord shall giue thee an vnquiet hart, and dasing eyes, and sorowe of minde,

That labor and are laden. 25

mind, and thy life shal hange in dout befoze thee: thou shalt feare both day and night, and shalt haue none assurance of thy life. In þ morning thou shalt say, Would God it were night: and at night thou shalt say, Would God it were morning, for feare of thine hart wherewith thou shalt be terrified, and because of those things which thou shalt see with thine eyes.

Briefly, if one did with due affection see and consider all the euills of euill men, either of enemies or frendes, he woulde not onely forgette his owne euills, and seeine vnto him selfe to suffer nothinge, but also with Moses and the Apostle Paule earnestly wishe that he might dye for them, and be rased out of the booke of life, and separate from Christ, as it is written Rom. 9, that they might be deliuered. Christ burning with this zeale and inflamed affection died for vs, and descended into hell, leauing vs an example, that we also should be so carefull for the euills of others, forgetting quite our owne, yea desirous of our owne.

¶ iii.

The sixt chapter of the sixt consideration,
which is of the euill on the right
hand.

*How we
may take
comfort by
considera-
tion of the
euill on the
right hand.*

On the right hande are our frendes, by
whose euills S. Peter teacheth that
our euil may be mitigated, 1. Pet. 5: Resist
the Deuill, sayth he, stedfast in the faith,
knowing that the same afflictions are ac-
complished in your brethren which are in
the world. The Church also desireth in her
prayers, that being prouoked and stirred
vp by the examples of the Sainctes, it may
imitate the vertue of their patient suffe-
ring, & singeth after this sort, Howe great
torments haue all the Sainctes suffered,
that they might attaine safely to the victo-
rie of martyrdome?

By which words & singing of y^e Church
we vnderstand, that the feastes, memoriez,
and names of Sainctes are celebrated for
this cause amonge other, that we may be
stirred vp and encouraged to beare y^e same
euills which they haue borne. By which
meanes if they be not worshipped, al other
kind of worshipping them can not be with-
out superstition, as there be many who ce-
lebrate

That labor and are laden, 27

lebrate these things, that they may not suffer the euil which the Saints by their example & memoꝛye teach to be suffered, & y they may be vnlike them, whose feasts they haue that they may become like vnto them.

But the Apostle doth most excellently of all handle this place of comfort in the 12. chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, saying: We haue not yet resisted vnto blood, struiuing against sinne: & ye haue forgotten the consolation, which speaketh vnto you as vnto childeꝛen: My sonne, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whō y Lord loueth, he chasteneth: & he scourgeth euery sonne that he receiueth. If ye endure chastening, God offereth him self vnto you as vnto sonnes: for what sonne is he, whom the Lord chasteneth not? If therfoꝛe ye be without coꝛrection whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastardes and not sonnes. Howeouer we haue had the fathers of our bodie which coꝛrected vs, & we gaue the reuerence: should we not much rather be in subiection vnto the father of spirits, y we might liue? Now no chastising for y pꝛesēt seemeth to be ioyous, but grienous: but af-

¶ iiii.

terward it bringeth the quiet frute of righteousness vnto them which are thereby exercised. Thus much sayth Paule.

Who would not be terrified with these wordes of Paule, where he expzessly affirmeth, that they are not the sonnes of God, which are without the correction of God? And who can be moze strongly confirmed, & moze effectually comforted, then he that heareth that they are loued of the Lorde which are chastened of him, that they are sonnes, that they haue communion with all the Sainctes, and that not they alone doe suffer? This vehement exhortation is able to make chastening and correction euen amiable and to be loued. Neither is here any place for excuse, for that some doe suffer lighter euills, some those that be moze grievous, for euery one is tried according to measure, not aboue his strength, as it is sayd Psal. 80: Thou shalt feede them with the bread of teares, and giue them teares to drinke with measure. The same Paule also sayth: God is faithfull, which will not suffer you to be tempted aboue that you be able, but will euen giue the issue with the temptation, that ye may be able to beare it.

Where

*There
ought not
therefore to
be impati-
encie in suf-
fering, be-
cause all
seeme not
to suffer a-
like.*

That labor and are laden. 29

Where therefore there is a greater euill, there are moze meanes to escape out of tentation, and moze helpe, so that the inequalitye of suffering is rather in appearance then in very deede.

Doth not the example of Iohn Baptist, whose feast we celebrate at this day that he was beheaded of Herode, greatly amaze vs all, that so great a man, then whome a greater hath not risen amonge them that are begotten of women, the speciall friend of the brydegrome, y^e forerunner of Christ, greater then all the Prophets, that such a one I say, was not put to death at the least by publike iudgement, was not at the least accused of some fayned crime, as Christ was, noz for the peoples sake, but at the request of the daughter of an harlot which had daunced before Herode, was beheaded in the prison? The ignominious death of this one Sainct; and his life so vilely and after so vnworthy a sort yeelded by into the handes of a moste malicious and cruell adulteresse, ought to lighten and assuage all our euill. Where was God here, who might see such things? where was Christ, who hearing this, did quite hold his peace?

*A notable
example of
the euill on
the right
hand, most
diligently
to be consi-
dered.*

He dieth as though he were unknowne vnto God, men, and all creatures. What doe we suffer, wherein, I will not say we may boast, but not at al be troubled, if it be compared to the death of this man? Or where shall we appeare, if we wil suffer nothing, when as so great men do vnderferuedly suffer so shamefull and ignominious death, and their bodies are mocked and scozned of their enemies after their death? Behold, sayth the Lord in Ieremie, they that men thought were vnneste to drinke of the cup haue drunke with the first, & thinkest thou then to be free? No no, thou shalt neither be quit nor free, but thou must drinke also.

*A singular
example of
an Eremite*

Rightly therfore did that Eremite, who when he had bene sicke euery yeare, being at the last one whole yeare in health, was very sorrowfull, and wept bitterly, saying that God had forgotten him, & denied vnto him his grace. So necessary and wholsom is the chastising of the Lorde to all Christians.

*The sufferings of the
Saints very comfort-
able being
well considered.*

Wherefore we shal see that it is litle or nothing which we suffer, if we consider how the Sainctes were thrust vnder the nayles with sharpe prickes, how they were imprisoned,

That labor and are laden. 31

soned, slaine with the sword, burned, torne in peeces wth wild beasts, & suffered infinite tormēt^s: yea if we doe but wey y^e tentations of them which are p^resent wth vs in this life, and suffer most grievous persecutions of the deuill. For there are which suffer moze sharpely and grievously then we doe, as well in spirit as in body.

Some say here: This I lament, that my suffering is not comparable to the sufferings of the Saints, because I am a sinner, & not wo^rthy to be compared wth them. They suffered for their innocencie, I suffer for my sinnes, wherfoze it is no maruell if they suffered all things cheerefully. This *Our sinnes ought not to hinder vs from taking comfort by cōsidering the sufferings of the Sainctes.* is a very vnwise saying. For if thou suffer for thy sinnes, thou must reioyce, that thy sinnes are scoured: were not y^e Saints also sinners? But fearest thou that thou art like Herode & the theefe on the left hande? Thou art not, if thou be patient: for what made difference betweene the theefe on the left hand and him on the right, but patience in saythe? If thou be a sinner, well, the theefe was a sinner also, but by patience he attained to the glozy of righteousness and sanctitie: which that thou maist

doe, doe likewise as he did. For thou canst not suffer but thou shalt suffer either for sinnes, or for righteousness: either suffering doth sanctifie and make blessed, if thou loue it, and suffer in faith: wherefore there is no excuse remaining. Finally as soone as thou hast faithfully confessed that thou dost suffer iustely for thy sinnes, thou art righteous and holy, as the theefe on the right hande. For the confession of sinne, inasmuch as it is of faith, doth iustifie and make holy, and so in a moment after suche confession thou dost not suffer for sinnes, but for innocencie: for he that is righteous doth not suffer but innocently: but thou art become righteous after faithfull confession of thy worthy suffering, and of thy sinnes. Wherefore thy suffering may truely and worthely be compared to the sufferinges of the Sainctes, euen as thy confession of thy sinnes may truely and worthely be compared to the confession of them: for there is one faith of all, one confession of sinnes, one suffering of euils, and one true communion of Sainctes in all and through all.

The

The seuenth chapter of the seuenth consideration, which is of the euill about vs.

Lastly we must lift vp our hart on hie, & ascend vp the mountaine of myrrre with the spouse. Here is Iesus Christ crucified, the head of all the Sainctes, the chiefe of all that suffer. The memozy of him is commended to the spouse, where it is sayd: Set me as a seale vpon thine hart, & as a signet vpon thine arme. The blood of this lambe beinge striken on the postes, suffereth not the angell the destroyer to apploch. Hereof is the spouse commended, that her heare is like purple (that is, her meditation is red by the memozy of Christes passion.) This is the tree which Moyses was commaunded to cast into the waters of Marah, that is, bitter passions, & they were made sweete. There is nothing that this passion doth not make sweete, euen death, as the spouse sayth: His lippes are like lillies, that droppe pure myrrhe. Nowe concerning this likenes of lillies and lippes, forasmuch as these are red, & those are white,

The euill about vs, & the comfort which the consideration thereof ministreth.

Cantic. 5.14

surely she speaketh mystically, that the words of Christ are most gentle and pure, wherein is no cruell bitternes or spite, but are sweete and mylde, which notwithstanding droppe and perswade pure and principall myrrre (that is most bitter death.) These most pure & sweete lippes are able to make most bitter death (which as pure myrrre taketh away at once all the stincke of sinne) sweete, mild, gentle, & acceptable. How shal this come to passe? Euen while thou hearest that Iesus Christ the Sonne of God, hath by his most holy suffering consecrated & made holy all passions, euen death it self, hath blessed malediction, hath glorified ignominie, hath enriched pouerty. So that death is compelled to be y^e gate of life, malediction the beginning of blessednes, ignominie the way to glory. Now how canst thou be so hard harted & vnthankful, that thou wouldest not euen wish for & loue all the passions which by y^e most pure and holy flesh and blood of Christ are sanctified, made harmeles, wholsom, blessed and happy vnto thee?

For if by the touching of his most pure flesh he hath sanctified all waters to baptism,

risme, how much more by the touching of y^e
 same his most pure flesh and blood, hath he
 sanctified all death, all sufferings, all iniu-
 ries, all sclaunders, all ignominie to y^e bap-
 tisme of the spirit or blood? as he sayth of
 the same baptism of suffering Luke 12: I
 must be baptised wth a baptisme, & howe am
 I griued till it be ended? Thou seest how
 he is disquieted, how he is griued, how he
 thirsteth to sanctifie & make amiable, pas-
 sions & death. For he saw that we were ter-
 rified wth passions, he saw that we did great-
 ly feare & dread death. Therfore as a most
 louing shepeheard, and faithfull phisition,
 minding to moderate this euil, he maketh
 hast & with grieffe desireth to die, & by suffe-
 ring to commēd the same vnto vs. So that *The death*
 the death of a Christian is to be counted *of a Chri-*
 like the bzalen serpent that Moses set vp, *stian.*
 which in euery respect resembled y^e forme
 of a serpent, but was wholly without life,
 without motion, without ventim, without
 stinging: so the righteous seeme in y^e eyes
 of the vnwise to die, but they are in peace.
 We are like to them that die, neither doth
 our death appeare any otherwise then the
 death of others, notwithstanding it is an

other thinge, for death is deade vnto vs. So also all our other sufferinges are like the sufferings of others, howbeit in appearance onely, but in very deede our sufferings are the beginnings of rest, as death is the beginning of life. And this is that which Christ sayth Iohn 8: If a man keepe my worde he shall neuer see death. Howe commeth it to passe that he shall neuer see it? because he dying, beginneth to liue, so by reason of the life which he seeth, he can not see death. For here the night shinech as the day, for that the light of the life beginning is moze cleare, then of the death ending. These thinges are certaine to all them that beleue in Christ, but to them that doe not beleue they are otherwise.

Wherefore if thou wouldest kisse, loue and embrace the coate of Christ, the vessels, waterpots, and whatsoeuer thinges Christ hath touched, and which he hath blessed, for most sweete relicks, as consecrated by his touching & blessing them: why doost thou not much moze loue, embrace & kisse paynes, troubles of the world, ignominie and death, not only consecrated by his touching,

ching, but also embrued and blessed with his most precious blood, mozeouer embraced wth hartly wil and exceeding loue, which vehemently moued him thereunto? especially seeing þ^e in these thou hast farre greater benefits, rewards & good things, then in those relicks. For by these thou obtaynest victo^{ry} of death and hell, and of all thy sinnes, and not by them, ¶ If a man might haue beheld the hart of Christ, when hanging on þ^e crosse he was distressed, that he might make death dead & contēptible, how earnestly & sweetely he embraced death & paines for the fearfull and them that dread death & paynes, how willingly he d^roonke of this cup to the sicke, that we also might not be afraide to d^rinke thereof, while we see that no euill, but onely good came vnto him by risinge againe: without doubt it would be pure my^{rr}e, distilling from his lippes, moste pleasaunt and sweete, as the sauour and goodlines of the lillies. Hereof speaketh Peter in his first Epistle and 4. chapter: Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for vs in the fleshe, arme your selues likewise with the same mynde. And Paule sayth Heb^z. 12: Consider him that en-

dured suche speaking against of sinners, least ye should be wearied & faint in your mindes.

What affection the consideration of the euill aboue vs ought to breede in vs.

Wherefore if in the former considerations, which are of things set as yet beneath vs or by vs, we haue learned to suffer euill patiently: surely by this last, which is of that y^e is now aboue & not by vs, we lifting by our hartis vnto Christ, and being made victors ouer all euills, are taught not onely to suffer them, but to loue, wishe, seeke the. And the farther a man is of from this affection, of so much lesse force is the crosse of Christ in him, as it is in them that vse the signe of the crosse, and Christes passion against euills and death, that they may not suffer nor die, endeouoring to attaine vnto that which is quite contrary to the crosse and death of Christ. Wherefore in this sequent consideration it must needes be swallowed vp and consumed, whatsoeuer euill we suffer, so that now it doe not onely not grieue, but also delight, howbeit if this consideration perse the hart, & be fixed in the inward affection of the mind.

Thus much concerning the former table:
the latter followeth.

Wc

That labor and are laden. 39

WE will deuide the second table into seuen considerations also, contrary to the former: whereof the first shall be of the inward good: The second of that which is to come: The thirde of that which is paste: The fourth of that which is beneath vs: The fift of that which is on the left hande: The sixt of that which is on the right hande: The seuenth of that which is aboue vs.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

of the first consideration, which
is of the inward good.



No is able to number euen those good thinges onely which euery one possesseth in his one person? First how many are the giftes of the bodye? as beautie, strength, health, quicknes of sense, whereunto in the male kinde may be added the moste noble sex, whereby he is fit to doe many things both
D it.

*The giftes
of the body*

*How we
may take
comfort by
considera-
tion of the
giftes of
the body.*

private and publique, and to achieve many notable exploits, whereunto a woman is bound. Nowe what a great matter is it, if by the blessing of God thou enjoyest these excellent gifts ten, twenty, thirty yeares to pleasure, & at the last art troubled in some one of them for the space of ten daies? It is a common saying among notorious offenders: It is but one ill howres matter, and agayne, A good howre is worth an ill howre. What shal be sayd of vs, who enjoy many good howres, and wil not suffer euill so much as one howre? We see therefore in how great plenty we enjoy the benefits of God, and with how few euills we are scarce touched, at the least the most of vs. Our most gracious God not content with these good things, giueth moreover riches, abundance of all things, if not to all, surely to many, and to them especially that are weake to beare euills. For as I haue sayd before, vpon whom he bestoweth lesse riches, or giftes of the body, vpon them he bestoweth more giftes of the mind, that all things may be equall, & he a iust iudge of all. For abundance of riches doth not so much comfort as a ioyful mind. Moreover
he

That labor and are laden. 41

he giueth vnto some goodly childe, great pleasure, power, rule, honour, fame, glory, fauour, &c. which if he permitte to enioy a long time, yea but a small time, they will easily admonish what is to be done in a litle euill.

But the giftes of the mind are more excellent then all these, as witte, knowledge, iudgement, eloquence, wisdom, & as in the other, so in bestowing of these he bleseth a meane and equalitie, so that vpon whom he hath bestowed more of these good thinges, he hath not therfore preferred them before others, whom in steede of these he hath giuen more peace or pleasure of the minde. Nowe in all these we must with thankfulness acknowledge the large liberalitie and bountifulnes of God, & comfort our infirmity, that in the multitude & plenty of good thinges we do not meruel, if some sharpenes be mingled therewith, seeing that to delicat persons neither roasted meate is liked without sauce, neither almost any other meate, which eyther hath not some sharpe taste of it selfe, or is tempered with some thinge that hath a sharpe taste: so vntolerable a thinge is continuall and onely sweetenes,

D iii.

42 Consolations for them

that one sayde rightly : All pleasure by continuance maketh it selfe lothesome. And an other said : Pleasure it selfe at the last is a labour, euen because this life is more weake, then that it is able without the temperature of euills, to enioy onely good thinges, by reason of the ouermuch aboundance of good thinges, whereupon hath risen this prouerbe, The bones must be stronge which shall beare good dayes, which prouerbe I oftentimes considering do greatly maruell what a maruelous and true meaning it hath, that mens minds are contrary to them selues, who seke no other but good dayes, which notwithstanding when they haue obtained, they can worse away with them then with euill.

Now what other thinge are we taught hereby, but that euen in the very enemies of the crosse, the crosse is maruelous, so that by the meanes thereof all ought to be tempered and sanctified least they perish, as flesh must be seasoned with salt, lest it stincke and corrupt.

Why then doe we not most willingly receiue this tēperature sent of God, which if he should not send, our life which is not a-
ble

That labor and are laden. 43

ble continually to suffer pleasures & good things, woulde procure it of it owne accord? We see therefore howe truely the wise man said of God: He reacheth from one ende to an other mightely, and louingly doth he order all things. If we thoroughly consider these things, that also will appeare to be true which Moses saith Deut. 32: He hath borne him on his shoulders, he hath caried him about, and kept him as y^e apple of his eye. Hereby we may stoppe the mouthes of them which vnthankfully babble that there are more euill then good things in this life, when as there are not wanting infinite good things and sweete commodities, but they are wanting which should see & acknowledge them with him that sayd: The earth is full of the goodnes of the Lorde. And agayne: The earth is full of his prayse. And Psal. 103: The earth is full of thy riches: thou hast made me glad by thy workes. Hereupon we daily singe: Heauen and earth are full of thy glory. Why so? because there are many good things whereby he may be praised, howbeit of them onely which see and acknowledge this fulnes. For as we haue

D iiii.

44 Consolations for them

sayd in the first consideration of euils, that the euills of euery one are so great, as is his opinion & knowledge of them: so also good thinges although they come vnto vs abundantly on euery side, yet are they only so great as they are esteemed. For al thinges that God hath made are exceeding good, yet are they not so acknowledged of all, as of them of whom y^e 103. Psalmes speaketh: They contemned that pleasant lande.

*Iob may be
a most ex-
cellent ex-
ample to
moue vs
patiently to
suffer euills
if the Lord
send them,
seeing we
receiue so
many good
thinges at
his hande.*

Of this consideration we may in Iob see a most goodly & singular example, who, all his goods being takē away, said: Shal we receiue good at the hande of God, & not receiue euil? a very golden saying, & a mighty comfort in tentation. For he did not onely suffer him selfe, but was tempted of his owne wife to impatiencie, who sayde vnto him: Dooſt thou continue yet in thy perfectnes? curse God & die: as if she should say: It is manifest that he is not God, who hath so forsaken thee, why therefore dooſt thou trust in him, & not rather denyng and cursing him, acknowledgest thy selfe mortall, vnto whom nothing shal remaine after this life? These & such like thinges doth euery mans wife, that is his sensuality & corrupt vnder.

That labor and are laden. 45

vnderstanding put into his mind in y^e time of tentation, because the sense sauoureth not the things that are of God.

Howbeit these are good things common to all: but a Christian is endued with farre better inward good things, as with y^e faith of Christ, wherof is spoken Psal. 44: The Kings daughter is al glorious within, her clothing is of bzoidered golde. For as we haue said entreating of the consideration of y^e first euill, that there can be none so great euil felt in man, which is the worst of those euils that are in him: so the best of y^e good things that are in a Christian he him selfe can not se. For if he did, he should be forthwith in heauen, forasmuch as the kingdom of heauē, as Christ saith, is within vs. For to haue faith is to haue the truth & word of God: to haue the worde of God is to haue God the maker of all things. Which good thinges howe great are they? if they were reuealed to the minde, it shoulde in a moment be losed from the bodye, by reason of exceeding sweetenes and pleasure: wherefore y^e other good things that we haue spoken of are rightly said to be as it were certain aduertizements of those good things,

*The inward
good things
of a Chri-
stian.*

46 Consolations for them

which we haue win, which God will haue commended vnto vs by them, for þ this life can not suffer that they should be reuealed, and therfoze God mercifully hideth them, vntill they haue increased vnto their full measure: no otherwise then louing parents doe sometime gyue vnto their children trifles oꝝ thinges of small value, thereby to allure their mindes to hope for greater.

*Fruites of
the most ex
cellēt good
thinge in
man.*

Notwithstanding they doe sometimes shew out and put forth them selues, when the ioyfull conscience reioyceth in trust in God, willingly speaketh of him, heareth his woꝝd with delight and pleasure, is ready and cherefull to serue him, to doe good woꝝks, to suffer euils, &c. All which are infallible tokens of an infinite and incomparable treasure hidden within, which distilleth forth these litle droppes in small measure: although it sometime cometh to passe that it is moze manifestly reuealed to mindes that are giuen to diuine contemplation, so þ being as it were in a trauunce, they can not tell where they are. Such were Augustin and his mother as they confesse of them selues, and many others.

The

The second chapter of the second consideration, which is of the good to come or before a man.

TO them that are not Christians little comfort can be giuen in their euills by the good things to come, for that al things be to them vncertaine. Nowbeit that notable affection which is called hope, is here cause of great trouble. By which affection men comfort them selues and bid one another hope for better thinges, whereby we vncertainely seeke after great thinges, being for the most part deceiued, as Christ teacheth of that man in the Gospell Luke 12, who sayd: I wil pul downe my barnes, and bulde greater, and therein will I gather all my frutes and my goods: and I will say to my soule: soule, thou hast much goods layde vppe for many yeares, liue at ease, eate, drinke and be merie. But God said vnto him, O foole, this night will they fetch away thy soule from thee, then whose shall those thinges be which thou hast prouided? So is he that gathereth riches to him selfe, and is not rich in God.

*Vncertaine
hope.*

48 Consolations for them

*God doth
not alwayes
suffer our
vncertaine
hope to be
frustrate, &
why.*

Howbeit God leaueth not the childe of men so, but in this affection to put away euill and attayne that which is good he comforteth them: albeit they be vncertaine of the thinges to come, yet doe they hope well, whereby in the meane while they are susteyned, lest that falling into the euill of desperation, they suffer not the present euill, and so doe worse thinges. Wherefore euen the affection of such hope is the gifte of God, not that he will haue them trust vnto it, but be moued to sounde and true hope which is in him alone. For he is therefore slow to anger that he may bring them to repentance, as it is sayde Rom. 2: neyther doth he suffer men to be deceyued by this deceitfull hope, if so be that they beginne from the hart and truely to hope in him.

But to Christians, beside these good thinges, two sortes of especiall good thinges shal assuredly come, howbeit by death and sufferinges. Now they also reioyce in that common vncertain hope & the present euill shal ende, & the contrary good shal be increased, although they doe not so much regard that, as they doe that their owne prosper

That labor and are laden. 49

per good is increased, which is truth in Christ, wherein they goe forwarde from day to day, for which they both liue & hope.

But beside these I haue sayd that two especiall good thinges shall come vnto them

in deathe. The first is, that by deathe the whole tragedie of the euills of this life is

ended, as it is witten: Precious in the sight of the Lord is y^e death of his Saints.

And againe: I will lay me downe, and also sleepe in peace. Againe: Though the

righteous be preuēted with death, yet shall he be in rest. Whereas contrariwise to the

wicked death is the beginning of euills, as the Psalmist sayth: The death of the wicked is very euill. Againe, Euills shall come

vppon the wicked man in destruction: so Lazarus shall be comforted, who hath suf-

fered his euills here, whereas the riche glutton shall be tormented, who hath here

enioyed his pleasures. So it commeth to passe, that a Christian whether he dye or

liue, hath alwayes the better: so blessed a thinge is it to be a Christian, and to beleue

in Christ, whereupon Paule saith: Christ is to me life, & death is to me aduauntage.

And Rom. 14. he sayth: Whether we liue,

*Christians
receiue cō-
fort by con-
sideration
of two espe-
ciall good
thinges to
come, wher
of one is,
that by
death their
afflictions
of this life
being en-
ded, they
shall be in
rest and
peace.*

50 Consolations for them

we liue vnto the Lord: or whether we die,
we die vnto y^e Lord: whether we liue ther-
fore or die, we are the Lordes. This safety
Christ hath obtained for vs, inasmuch as
he dyed and rose agayne that he might be
Lord of the liuing and dead, being able to
make vs quiet and safe as well in life as in
death, as the 22. Psalm saith: Though I
walke through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will feare no euill, for thou art
with me. If this commoditie of death doe
litle moue vs, it is a signe that the faith of
Christ is weake in vs, which doth not suffi-
ciently esteeme the treasure and commodi-
tie of a good death, or doth not yet beleue
that death is good, the olde man which as
yet liueth too much, & the wisdom of the
fleshe hindering vs. We must endeouour
therefore that we may know and loue this
benefit of death. It is a great matter that
death which to others is exceeding euill,
shoulde be made to vs exceeding good and
comodious. And if Christ had not brought
this to passe for vs, what thinge should he
haue done worthy of so great a price as he
payed? It is a very diuine worke which he
did, and therefore it should be no maruel to
any,

That labor and are laden. 51

any, that he made the euill of death exceeding good.

Wherefoze death is nowe deade to the faithfull, and hath nothing terrible but onely a certaine semblance and appearance. No otherwise then a serpent that is slaine, in outward forme and appearance he is terrible as befoze, but in very deede it is onely a seeming or appearance of euill, the euill it selfe is nowe dead and harmelesse. Yea as in the 21. chapter of Numb. God commaunded a brazen serpent to be set vp, by the sight wherof the liuing serpents did perish: so also our death by faithfull and stedfast beholding of the death of Christ, doth perish, and onely appeareth terrible, but can not hurt vs in very deede. So doth the mercye of God afozehande exercise vs that are weake, with these goodly figures or semblances, that forasmuch as death can not be taken away, he may at y least make the force thereof to be nothing but in outward shew and appearance only, for which cause also death in the Scriptures is called sleepe rather then death.

The other good thing that commeth by death, is, that it doth not onely ende the

*Death can
not hurte
the faithfull*

*The other
special good
thing to
come, the
considera-
tion wherof
is comfort-
able to
Christians.*

troubles and afflictions of this life, but which is more excellent, it maketh an end of vices and sinnes, which maketh death farre more acceptable to the faithfull, as we haue sayd before, then the good which we haue nowe spoken of. For the euills of the soule which are sinnes, are without comparison worse then the euills of the bodye. Which onely if we did knowe, they would make death most amiable vnto vs. Now if they do not so, it is a signe that we doe not sufficiently feele nor hate the euills of our soule. Whereas therfore this life is most perillous, dangerous sinne seeking to deceiue vs on euery side, and we can not liue without sinne: moste commodious death setteth vs free from these perills, and cutteth of sinne quite from vs, whereupon in the booke of wisdom it is sayd in praise of the righteous: He pleased God and was beloued of him, so that whereas he liued amonge sinners, he translated him. He was taken away least wickednes shoulde alter his vnderstanding, or deceit beguile his minde. For wickednes by bewitching obscureth the thinges that are good, and the vnstedfastnes of concupiscence peruerteth the

That labor and are laden. 53

the simple minde (O howe true are these things and confirmed by daily experience? Though he was soone deade, yet fulfilled he much time, for his soule pleased God: therefore hastened he to take him away from wickednes.

So by the mercie of God, death, which to man was the punishment of sinne, is made to Christians the ende of sinne, and the beginning of life and righteousness. Wherefore he that loueth life and righteousness, must needes, not feare, but loue deathe, which is the Minister of them, and meane to come vnto them: otherwise he shall neuer attayne neyther to lyfe nor righteousness. Nowe he that can not doe this, let him praye vnto God, that he may. For therefore are we taught to saye, Thy will be done, because we of our selues are not able to doe it, whoe fearinge deathe, doe loue death and sinne rather then life and righteousness. For, that God ordayned deathe for the abolishinge of sinne it maye hereof be gathered, for that he enioyned deathe to Adam by and by after he had sinned, as it were amendes of sinnes, and that before he

¶

caste him out of Paradise, that he might shewe vnto vs that deathe worketh no euill, but all good in vs, seeing that it was enioyned in paradise as it were repentance and satisfaction. It is true in deede that death entred into the worlde by the malice of the Deuill, but it is to be attributed to the singular goodnes of God that death being so entred, he not onely suffered it not to hurt, but ordayned it euen from the beginning thereof for the punishment and death of sinne.

For this he signified, whereas when he had first denouced death vnto Adam, in his commaundement that he should not eate of the tree of knowledge, he afterward notwithstanding did not holde his peace, but did againe enioyne death, & tempered the rigour of his first denouncing, yea did not so much as make mention of death in any sillable, but onely sayde: In the sweate of thy face shalt thou eate bread, till thou be turned againe into the ground, for out of it wast thou taken: Dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou be turned again. As though he then hated death, which he would not so much as name, according to that saying: **He**

That labor and are laden. 55

He endureth but a while in his anger, but in his fauour is life. He seemed in thus speaking, that, vnlesse death had bene necessary for þe abolishing of sinne, he woulde not so much as mention or name it, much lesse enioyne it. So against sinne which had wrought death, the emulation of God armeth no other thing but death it selfe, so that here thou mayst see that saying of the Poet verified, that the worker of death doth perishe by his owne worke, and that sinne is destroyed by it owne proper frute, and is slayne by death which it brought forth, as the viper of her offsprig. This is a most goodly sight, to see how sinne is, not by an others, but by it owne proper worke destroyed, slayne with it owne weapon, & as of Goliath, so þe head thereof cut of with it owne sword. For Goliath was a figure of sinne, a terrible Champion to all, except litle David, that is, Christ, who alone ouercame him, and cut of his heade with his owne sword. If therefore we meditate vpon the toyes of this power of Christ, and vpon the giftes of his grace, why should a litle euil trouble vs, when as in so great an euill to come we see so great good thinges?

The worker destroyed by his owne work: sinne abolished by death which is its owne proper frute.

The third chapter of the third consideration, which is of the good past, or behind a man.

We are moved to the consideration of the good past, that is of Gods goodnes bestowed upon vs heretofore, and to take comfort thereby, by the examples of Augustin David, and by our own experience.

The consideration of this good is easie, by the contrary consideration of the euil past, we thinke it sufficient only to help him that shal consider hereof. Herein B. Augustin doth excellently well in his confessions, where in a most goodly sort he rehearseth y^e benefits of God bestowed vpon him from his mothers wombe. The same doth David in that notable 138. Psalm, y^e beginning wherof is: O Lord, thou hast tried me, where among other things wondering at y^e p^rouidence of God ouer him, he sayth: Thou vnderstandest my thoughtes long befoze: thou compasshest my pathes & my lying downe. As if he sayd: Whatsoever I haue euer thought, whatsoever I haue wrought, and whatsoever I was to obtayne or possesse, I see now, how it was not done by mine owne industry, but ordained by thy care long befoze. Finally thou hast foreseene all my wayes: and there is not a word in my tongue, where then? euen in thy power. These thinges we learne by
our

our owne experience . For if we call to minde our life past , is it not a wonderful thinge that we haue thought, willed, done, and sayd such thinges, as we neuer coulde foresee , but would haue done farre other thinges , if we had bene left to our owne free will , which we nowe first perceiue, namely we see that the hande of God hath bene so present with vs , that his care hath bene so constant ouer vs, that we could neither haue spoken , neither willed nor thought those thinges which we haue, vnles he had giuē abilitie, as it is sayd in the booke of wisdom chap. 7 : In his hande are both we and our wordes . And Paule saythe : who worketh all thinges in vs. Why then are we not ashamed being senselesse and hard harted, who being taught by our owne experience, doe see howe careful the Lorde hath bene for vs vntill this howre, and hath giuen vs all good things? and yet we can not committe the same care of vs to him in a small present euill , but we so behaue our selues, as though he had forsaken vs , or coulde by any meanes forsake vs . David did not so in the 39. Psalme , where he sayeth : As for me ,
 C iii.

I am poore & needy, but the Lorde careth for me. How should he not, sayth B. Augustine, haue care of thee, when as thou art now that which he would that thou shouldest be? But we part the rule betwene God and vs: we attribute this vnto him that he hath made vs, and yet we scarce or faintly do that, we arrogate to our selues the care of our selues, as though he had made vs, & had by and by gone away, leauing vs in our owne power to be ruled and gouerned.

*What we
must doe
when
through the
blindnes of
our owne
wisedom &
vnderstan-
ding we can
not see the
care of God
ouer vs.*

If so be that our owne wisedom & counsels hinder vs, that we can not see this care of God ouer vs, when as perhaps many thinges fall out according to our purposes, let vs with Dauid Psal. 138 enter into consideration of our selues. He sayth: My bones are not hid from thee, which thou hast made in a secret place, (that is, thou didest see and make my bones in the wombe of my mother, when as I yet was not, when as my mother did not yet know what was done in her) neither is it hid from thee that I was fashioned in the neather parts of the yearth (that is, the shape or forme of my bodye in the most inward bowells of my mother was not hid from thee,

thee, for that thou didst frame it). What doth the Prophet meane by these wordes, but to declare vnto vs by this notable example, what care God hath alwayes had of vs without the knowledge or meanes of our selues? For who can glory that he hath bene a meane or helpe that he might be fashioned in his mothers wombe? Who made the mother haue a care to giue suck, to nourish, loue, and doe all such duties of a mother, when we did not as yet perceiue our life, yea whereof (vnlesse seeing the like done in others, we did beleue that they were also done to vs) we should know or remember nothing at all, forasmuch as these thinges were done vnto vs, no otherwise then to them that sleepe, yea to them that be dead, or rather to them that are not yet bozne, as much as pertaineth to our knowledge.

So we see howe without knowledge or meanes of our selues we enioye the mercies and consolations of God: We notwithstanding as yet dout, or euen despeire, that he hath care of vs euen at this day. Whom this experience will not teach and moue, I knowe not what can teach & moue

60 Consolations for them

*We must
cast our
care on
God for
that he ca-
reth for vs.*

him. For we see this most manifestly ap-
peare vnto vs commonly in all infantes, so
that so many examples set forth to our fol-
ly & hardnes, ought woꝛthely to make vs
greatly ashamed, if we dout that euen the
least good or euill commeth vnto vs with-
out the singular care of God. Blessed Pe-
ter sayth: Cast all your care on him, for he
careth for you. And Dauid sayth Psal. 36:
Cast thy care vpon the Lorde, and he shall
feede thee. Moreover B. Augustine sayth
vnto his soule in his confessions: Why sta-
dest thou vpon thy selfe and standest not in
deede? cast thy selfe vpon him, for he will
not withdraue his hand that thou maist fal.
And againe Peter sayth, 1. Pet. 4: Where-
fore let them that suffer according to the
will of God, commit their soules to him in
wel doing, as vnto a faithfull Creator.

O, if a man knew his God after this sort,
how secure, how quiet, how pleasāt should
he be? Such a one should haue God true-
ly, knowing assuredly that all his thinges
whatsoever they be, haue come & doe come
vnto him, by the direction and disposing of
God his most sweete will. The saying of
Peter standeth certaine, he careth for you.

What

That labor and are laden. 61

What can we heare moze sweete & pleasant then this saying? therefore sayth he, cast all your care vpon him. If we doe not this, what doe we else, but endeouour to let & hinder the care of God, & also make our life vnto our selues troublefom, painefull, careful, by many feares, cares & troubles? and that in vaine, for we doe not any thing hereby further our rest or quietnes, but as the Preacher in his booke sayth: This is a vanitie of vanities, & vexation of the spirit. For in all the same booke he speaketh of experience hereof, inasmuch as he had tried many things for him selfe, and in all notwithstanding he founde nothing but labour, vanitie & vexation of the spirit: so that he concludeth, that it is the gift of God, if a man eate & drinke, & reioice with his wife, that is, liueth without care, committing y^e care of him selfe vnto God. Wherefore we ought to haue no other care of our selues, the^r y^e we may not be careful for our selues, & may commit the care of vs vnto God. As for other things that might be spokē here, euery one may as I haue sayd know them by the contrary consideration, and by calling to mind his whole life past.

*What will
ensue if we
cast not our
care on
God.*

The fourth chapter of the fourth consideration, which is of the good beneath vs.

*By comparing the
state of the
dāned with
our owne,
we shall per
ceiue the
exceeding
mercy of
God toward
vs, & the
inestimable
cōmodities
which we
enjoy
through his
goodnes.*

Hitherto we haue seene the good things which are our owne, and in our selues, we will nowe consider those that are in others, and without vs: the first whereof is in them which are beneath vs, that is the dead and damned. Howbeit it seemeth very straunge, that any good can be found in the deade and damned. But the power of h diuine goodnes is euery where so great, that it maketh that we may se good things euen in the greatest euils. Now let vs first compare them with our selues, then shall we see our inestimable commodities, as it may easily be vnderstoode by the contrary consideration of euills. For as great euils of death and hel as we see in them, so great without dout doe we see our commodities to be, yea and so much greater, as their euils are greater. All which are not to be lightly passed ouer, forasmuch as they doe greatly commende vnto vs the exceeding mercie of God. And it is to be feared, that
if

That labor and are laden. 63

if we make small account of these, we shall be found vnthankfull, and condemned together with them, or tormented worse, for that the more we see them to be grieved & sorrowfull, so much more ought we to reioyce for Gods goodnes toward vs, according to that saying in Esai chap. 65: Behold, my seruaunts shall eate, but ye shall haue hunger: behold, my seruaunts shall drinke, but ye shall suffer thirst: beholde, my seruaunts shall be merie, but ye shall be confounded: behold my seruaunts shall reioyce for very quietnes of hart, but ye shall crie for sorowe of harte, and complayne for vexation of minde: your name shall ye leaue accursed amonge my chosen, &c. Finally as I haue said, the examples of them that die ill, and are condemned, as B. Gregorie sayth in a certaine Dialogue, ought to brynge this good vnto vs, that they shoulde admonishe and teach vs, that he is happye, whome other mens harmes doe make to beware. Howbeit this good, forasmuch as it is commonly knowne, doth little moue vs, when as notwithstanding it is to be counted amonge the chiefe, and is not lightly esteemed of them that are wise: for

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asmuch as a great part of the holy Scripture tendeth hereunto, namely where it is taught of the wrath, iudgements & threatenings of God. Which most wholsome doctrine, the examples of the most miserable should make most wholsom vnto vs, which then begin to be effectuell, when we are so affected as they are which suffer them, and as though we were in their place and person. For then they wil moue and admonish vs to prayse his goodnes, who hath preserved vs from those thinges.

The consideration of the state of the damned ought to moue vs to reioyce in God, and to praise & extoll his iustice.

These dead & damned must be compared also with God him selfe, whereby we may see the diuine iustice in them. This albeit it be harde, yet must we endeouour to doe it. For seeing that God is a iust Iudge, his iustice muste be loued and praysed: and therfore must we reioice in God euen then when he destroyeth the euill both in body and soule, because in all these his entire and vnspeakeable iustice shineth. Wherefore hell also is full of God and the souereigne good as well as heauen. For the iustice of God is God him selfe, and God is the souereigne good. As his mercie therefore, so also his iustice or iudgemēt ought with
most

That labor and are laden. 65

most hartie affection to be loued, and most highly to be extolled and praysed. Whereupon David sayeth: The righteous shall reioyce when he seeth the vengeance: he shall washe his handes in the blood of the wicked. For this cause the Lorde forbade Samuell I. Kinges, 16, that he shoulde mourne no more for Saul, sayinge: Howe longe wilt thou mourne for Saul, seeing I haue cast him awaye from reigning ouer Israell? As if he sayde: Doth my wil so displease thee, that thou preferrest mans will before myne? Finally hereupon come those sayinges of prayse and ioye throughe the whole Psalter, that the Lorde is a Iudge of the widowes, and a Father of the fatherlesse, that he will auenge the afflicted and iudge the poore: that his enemies shall be confounded, the wicked shall be destroyed, and many suche like. If any will with foolish picie haue compassion on that bloody generation, which slayeth the righteous (yea euen the Sonne of God) & of that exceeding great company of the wicked, he shal be found to reioyce at their wickednes, and to allow those things that they haue done, being worthy to pe-

rish together with them, whose sinnes he would not haue punished: and he shal heare that saying which is in the second booke of Kinges chap. 19: Thou louest thine enemies, and hatest thy frendes. For so sayde Iob to Dauid, when he too much mourned for wicked Absolon his sonne. Wherefore we ought here to reioyce at all the godlines of the Sainctes, and the iustice of God, who most iustly punisheth the persecutors of godlines, that he may deliuer his elect from them. And so thou seest that not small but exceeding good thinges doe manifestly appeare in the deade and damned: namely, that the iniurie of all the Sainctes is reuenged and punished, and thine also if thou be righteous with them. What maruell is it then, if by thy present euill he punish thine enemye, that is the sinne of thy body, yea thou oughtest to reioyce because of this most excellent benefite of Gods iustice, who, thou not desiring it, so slayeth and destroyeth in thy selfe thy worst enemye, that is, thy sinne. Whereof if thou haue compassion, thou shalt be found a frend of sinne, and an enemye of iustice working in thee: which thou must especially

That labor and are laden. 67

ally take heede of, lest it be sayd vnto thee also: Thou louest thine enemies, and hastest thy frendes. As therfoze thou oughtest to reioyce on the behalfe of iustice being seuerer against thy sinne, so thou oughtest to reioyce on the behalfe of the same also, being seuerer against the wicked, which are enemies of men and God. Thus thou seest that in the greatest euills are seene singular good thinges, and that we may reioyce in the greatest euills, not because of the euills them selues, but because of the soueraigne goodnes of iustice that deliuereth and auengeth vs.

The fift chapter of the fift consideration,
which is of the good on the
left hand.

Here we must enter into consideration of our aduersaries, who as yet remaine in this life (for in the chapter going before we haue spoken of them that are already damned and in like case with the deuills) these we must beholde with an other affection, and consider two sortes of their good thinges. First that they abound with

*The wicked
most com-
monly a-
bound with
temporall
good things*

temporall good thinges, so that the p^{ro}-
phets haue bene almost moued euen to en-
uie by their prosperitie, as Dauid p^{sa}l.
72: My feete were almost gone, my steps
had wellneare slipt: for I freated at the so-
lish, when I saw the prosperie of the wic-
ked. And afterwardes: Loe these are the
wicked, yet prosper they alway, and in-
crease in riches. Ieremie chap. 12 sayth:
O Lorde thou art more righteous then
that I should dispute with thee, neuerthe-
lesse let me talke with thee in thinges rea-
sonable: Howe happeneth it that the way
of the vngodly is so prosperous? and that
it goeth so well with them, which without
any shame offend and liue in wickednes?

*God bestow
eth abun-
dance of
temporall
good things
vpon the
wicked, that
he may
thereby co-
fer vs.*

Why doth he freely poure forth so ma-
ny good things vpon them, and lose them,
but that he may comfort vs, and declare
how good he is vnto them which are pure
in hart as the same 72 p^{sa}lme sayth. He
that is so good to the wicked, howe much
more good will he be to the godly? albeit
he tryeth them with many euills, so that
not onely in the present good thinges, but
also in them that be hid and as yet to come,
they acknowledge him to be good vnto
them,

That labor and are laden. 69

them, and saye with Dauid in the same
Psalme: As for me, it is good for me to
drawe neare to God, to put my trust in the
Lorde. As if he sayde: Albeit I am some-
what troubled, inasmuch as I see them
free, notwithstanding I trust that God is
much more gracious vnto me then vn-
to them. And so the visible good thinges
of the wicked are a meane to stirre vs vp
to hope for inuisible good thinges, and to
contemne the euills that we suffer, ac-
cording to the commaundement of Christ
Matth. 6, where he biddeth vs to beholde
the foules of the ayre, and the Lillies of
the feld, and sayth? If God then so clothe
the grasse of the feld, which is to daye,
and to morrow is cast into the ouen, shall
he not doe much more vnto you, O ye of
little faythe? Wherefore by comparing to-
gether the good thinges wherewith the e-
uill abounde, and the euill which we suf-
fer, our faythe is exercised, and wee ob-
tayne comfort in God, which onely is ho-
ly and true comfort, so that all thinges
work together for the best vnto y^e Saints.

The other good, which is much more
meruelous, is, that their euills are vnto vs

*The euills
of the wic-
ked turne*

unto good
so the god-
ly.

good, such a care hath God of vs. For although their sinnes be offensive to the weaker sort, yet to the stronge they are an exercise of vertue, and an occasion more strongly to fight, & to obtaine a more glorious victorie. For blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed he shall receiue the crowne of life. Now what is a greater temptation then that multitude of most wicked examples? Hereof is the worlde called one of the enemies of the Saintes of God, for that by the enticements and wicked workes thereof it moueth, prouoketh and allureth from the way of God vnto his owne waye, as it appeareth Gen. 6: The sonnes of God sawe the daughters of men that they were sayre, & they tooke them wiues such as they liked from amonge them all. And Num. 25 it is sayd that the children of Israel committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, so that it is wholsom for vs to be alwayes afflicted with some trouble, lest that being weake, and stumbling at the offences of the world, we fal and sinne. Wherefore Lot is commended of Peter 2. Pet. 2, for that he suffered many thinges by the most wicked

That labor and are laden. 71

ked example of the Sodomytes, and increased in righteousness hereby. It is needefull therefore that these offences come, which may be an occasion to vs to fight & obtaine the victorie. Notwithstanding wo vnto the worlde because of offences. Nowe if in the sinnes of others God procureth vnto vs so great good things, how much more ought we to beleue with our whole hart that he will worke good vnto vs in our owne euil, although the sense and fleshe iudge otherwise.

No lesse good doth the worlde bringe vnto vs on the other side of his euils, which is aduersitie. For whom it can not winne by enticements, neither adioyne to it selfe by euill examples, then it endeuoureth by afflictions to expell from it selfe, and to trouble them by painefull euills, alwayes either seeking deceitfully to entrap them by the example of the wicked, or cruelly raging against the by grievous torments. For this is that monster Chimera hauing a head fayre like the head of a virgin, a belly terrible like the belly of a Lyon, a tayle deadely like the tayle of a Serpent: for the ende as well of the pleasure as of the

The troubles and afflictions which the godly suffer of the world turne to their commodity & profit.

¶ ii.

tyrannie of the worlde is poyson and eternall deathe. As therefore in the sinnes of the worlde God hath made vs to finde good thinges, so also the persecutions thereof are not in vaine and frustrate, but are ordained for the increase of our good thinges, that euen in that wherein they hurte vs, they may be compelled to profit vs, as B. Augustine speaketh of Herode who slue the children: He coulde neuer haue profited so much by obedience, as he profited by hatred. And B. Agatha went reioycing to the prison as vnto a banket, saying after this sorte: Unlesse thou make my bodie to be handled throughly of thy tormenter, my soule can not with glorious victorie enter into Paradise: euen as the grayne if it be not well threshed & beaten out of the huske, is not layde vppe in the garner. But why doe we here stande vpon these fewe examples? seeing we knowe that the whole Scripture, the writings and sayinges of all the Fathers, the works and deedes of all the Sainctes doe agree in this, that they are moste profitable to the beleeuers, who seeme to be vnto them moste hurtfull, so that they be rightly
suffered

That labor and are laden. 73

suffered and bozne: as Peter sayeth in his first Epistle chap. 3: And who is it that can harme you, if ye followe that which is good? And Dauid sayeth Psal. 88: The enemy shall not oppresse him, neyther shall the wicked hurte him. Howe shall he not hurte him, when he ostentymes euen killeth him? surely because by hurting he doth greatly profite him. So we see that we doe on euery side dwell in the middes of good thinges, if we be wise, and yet also in the middes of euils, so mercifulously are all thinges ordered by the power of the diuine goodnes.

The sixt chapter of the sixt consideration, which is of
the good on the
right hand.

This is the Church of the Saints, the newe creature of God, our brethren & frends, in whom we see nothing but good, nothing but consolation, howbeit not alwaies wth fleshly eies (for according to y^e outward appearāce they are for y^e most part to be referred to the contrary consideration

*The good
on the right
hand.*

Jf iii.

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of euils) but with spiritual eyes. Although euen those their good thinges also which are seene with fleshly eies, are not to be re-
 fected, but we may perceiue that euen in these God doth comfort vs. For Dauid in the 72 Psalm he durst not disallow of all that possessed riches in the world, saying: If I should say that I would iudge after this sort, lo then I should cōdemne y generation of thy childezen, that is, if I should say that all are euill, which are rich, healthful, and had in estimation, I should then cōdemne thy Sainctes, of whome many are such. The Apostle mozeouer teacheth Timothy to charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not hie minded, not forbidding them to be rich. And y Scripture declareth that Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob were rich. Daniel with his fellowes were had in honour and reputacion euen in Babylon: finally many Kinges of Iuda were holy men. Dauid therfore cōsidering these sayth: If I should say that I would iudge so, I should cōdemne the generation of thy childezen. God I say giueth to his abundance of these good thinges, to the comfort of them & of others, but these are not their

That labor and are laden. 75

proper good thinges, yea they are but shadowes in respect of the true good thinges, which are faith, hope, loue, and other graces and gistes, all which are made common by loue.

This is the Communion of Sainctes, wherein we reioyce. And who doth not glory here euen in great euills, who beleueth, as it is in deede, that the good thinges of all the Sainctes are his good thinges, that his euill is theirs also. For this consideration is most sweete and pleasaunt, whereof the Apostle admonisheth in the Epistle, to the Galathians in this saying: Beare ye one an others burden, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Is it not good for vs to be here, where if one member, as the Apostle saith 1. Cor. 12, suffer, all suffer with it: if one member be had in honour, al the members reioyce with it? Therefore when I suffer, I suffer not now alone, all Christians suffer with me, yea Christ him selfe, as it is sayd: He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of myne eye. So others beare my burden, their power is mine, the fayth of the Church helpeth my infirmities, the charitie of others beareth the tentation of my

*What
great ioy
& comfort
we haue by
the communion of
Sainctes,
which is
the good on
the right
hande.*

F iiii.

Iust, the fastings of others are for my commoditie, the prayer of an other is carefull for me, and briefly the members are so carefull one for an other, that those which are more honest doe couer, keepe, honour them that seeme vn honest, as the Apostle notably describeth 1. Cor. 12. And so I may truly reioyce in the good thinges of an other, as if they were mine owne. Be it then that I be foule and filthye, yet they whom I loue, and with whome I reioyce, are sayre & goodly; by which loue I make not onely their good thinges, but euen them selues mine. Wherefore my ignominie shal be easily honoured vnder their glorie, their abundance shal supply my want. Who then can despeire in sinne? who doth not reioyce in afflictions, for that he doth not now beare his sinnes and paynes, or if he beare them, he beareth them not alone, being holpen with so many Sainctes that are the sonnes of God, yea being holpen of Christ him selfe? So excellent a thing is the Communion of Sainctes, & the church of Christ.

Now if there be any that doth not be-
lieue that these things are thus, he is an in-
fidel,

That labor and are laden. 77

fiuell, and hath denied Christ & the church.
For although these thinges were not felt,
yet are they so in deede: but who doth not
feele them? For that thou doost not de-
speire, that thou doost not become impati-
ent, who is the cause? Thyne owne power?
no surely, but the communion of Sainctes.
Otherwise thou wert not able to beare e-
uen a small sinne, thou couldst not suf-
fer the woꝛde of a man agaynste thy selfe:
so nighe is Christ and the Church. This
is that which we saye: I beleue in the
holy Ghost, the holy Catholike Church,
the Communion of Sainctes. Nowe
wherein doe the Sainctes communicate?
euen in good and euill thinges, all thinges
are common amonge them all, as the Sa-
crament of the Lordes supper doth signifie
in the breade and wine, we are sayde of the
Apostle to be one breade, one body. Nowe
who offendeth a part of the body, wherein
he offendeth not the whole body? what
doth y^e litle toe suffer, which y^e whole body
doth not suffer? what good is done euen to
the feete, wherein the whole body doth not
reioyce? But we are one body: whatsoe-
uer an other suffereth, I suffer and beare

*As in the
Lordes sup-
per the
bread is
one though
it consist of
many
graines, &
the wine
one though
pressed out
of many
grapes: so
the Sainctes
being par-*

*akers of
his Supper,
though they
be many,
yet are they
one body,
and there-
fore com-
municate
both in
good and
euill.*

it, and whatsoeuer good is done to him, it is done to me. So sayth Christ, that it is done to him, whatsoeuer is done to the least of his. Who taking a peece of the bread of the Lordes Supper, is not sayd to take bread? who contemning a peece thereof, is not sayd to contemne bread?

Wherefore if we be grieued, if we suffer, if we die, let vs remember and firmly beleue and be assured, that not we, or that not we alone, but Christ and the Church are grieued, suffer and die with vs. Christ would not haue vs to be alone in the way of deathe, which euery man dzeadeth, but the whole Church accompanying vs, we enter into the way of suffering and death, and the Church doth suffer moze strongly then we our selues, so that we may truely apply to our selues þ which Eliseus said to his seruaut being afraid: 4. King 6: Feare not, for they that be with vs are moe then they that be with them. And Eliseus pray- ed and sayd: Lord I beseech thee open the eyes of this yong man that he may see: and the Lord opened the eyes of the yong man and he looked: and behold the mountayne was full of hozses & charrets of fire rounde about

That labor and are laden. 79

about Eliseus. This onely also remayneth vnto vs, that we pray that our eyes may be opened, that we may see the Church about vs, that, I say, the eyes of our faith may be opened, then shall we feare nothing, but shall perceiue that to be most true which David sayeth Psal. 124: As the mountaines are about Ierusalem, so is the Lord about his people from henceforth and for euer. Amen.

The seuenth chapter of the seuenth consideration, which is of the good about vs.

I Speake nothing of the eternall and heauenly good thinges which the blessed enioy in the manifest sight of God, or at the least I speake of them in faith, and as they may be comprehended of vs. So this seuenth consideration is of Iesus Christ, the King of glorie, rayled from the deade: as the seuenth consideration of euills was of him suffering, dead, and buried. Here we may see the chiefe ioy of our hart, and certaine and sure good thinges: here is no euil at all, because Christ being rayled from

The good about vs, & the most sweete ioy & comfort which the due consideration thereof bringeth.

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y dead, dyeth no moze: death hath no moze
 dominion ouer him. This is the furnace
 of loue, and the fire of God in Sion, as
 Esai sayth. For Christ is bozne vnto vs,
 and not onely that, but also giuen vnto
 vs. Wherefore his resurrection is mine,
 and all thinges that he hath wrought ther-
 by. And as the Apostle most notably glo-
 rieth Rom.8: Howe shall he not with him
 giue vs all thinges? But what hath he
 wrought by rysing agayne? He hath de-
 stroyed sinne, set vp righteousness, swal-
 lowed by death, & restored life: overcome
 hell, and purchased eternall glorie. These
 thinges are inestimable, so that the minde
 of man dare scarce beleue, that they are
 giuen vnto him: as Iacob Gen.45, when
 he hearde that his sonne Ioseph was a-
 liue and gouernour ouer the lande of E-
 gypt, as it were awaking out of a deepe
 sleepe, he did not beleue them that tolde
 him, vntill they telling vnto him all the
 wordes of Ioseph, which he had sayd vn-
 to them, shewed him also all the charretts,
 which Ioseph had sent to carie him. So
 surely it is harde to beleue that so great
 good thinges are in Christ bestowed vpon
 vs

That labor and are laden. 81

vs that are vnworthye, vnlesse in many wordes he declare the same vnto vs, and as he made him selfe manifest to his Disciples by often appearing vnto them, so he teach vs so to beleue, as it were by charrets, that is, by vse and experience. It is a most goodly and pleasaunt charret, that of God he is made vnto vs wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, as the Apostle sayth 1. Cor. 1. For I am a sinner, but I am caried in his righteousness, which is giuen vnto me: I am vncleane, but his holines is my sanctification, wherein I am sweetely caried: I am foolish, but his wisdom carieth me: I am damnable, but his liberty is my redemption: so that a Christian which beleueth may glory of the merits of Christ, and of all his good thinges no otherwise then if he himself had done them, so properly do they belong vnto him, so that he dare now quietly looke for euen y iudgement of God, which notwithstanding is intolerable. So great a thing is faith, so great good thinges doth it obtaine for vs, so glorious sonnes of God doth it make vs. For we can not be sonnes, vnlesse we inherit the good thinges of our

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father . A Christian therefore may boldly say : Death, where is thy victorie ? death, where is thy sting, that is, sinne ? for the sting of death is sinne, and the strength of sinne is the law, but thanks be vnto God, which hath giuen vs victorie through our Lord Iesus Christ : that is, the lawe maketh vs sinners, sinne maketh vs guiltie of death . Who hath ouercome these two ? Our owne righteousness ? our owne life ? No surely , but Iesus Christ rayled from death, who hath condemned sinne & death, hath imparted his righteousness vnto vs, hath giuen vs his merites , hath layed his hand vpon vs , so that we are in good case, and doe fulfill the law, and ouercome sinne and death , for which honour , prayse and thanks be to God for euer, Amen.

This therfore is the last consideration, whereby we are now lifted vp not onely aboue our owne euills , but also aboue our owne good thinges, and doe now enioy the good thinges of an other , gotten by an others labour , who befoze were oppressed with the euills caused by the sinne of an other, and increased by our owne : We enioy I say the righteousness of Christ, whereby

That labor and are laden. 83

by he him selfe is righteous, because we cleaue vnto it, by which he pleaseth God, and maketh intercession for vs, & maketh him selfe wholly ours, being our most gracious Priest and Patron. As vnpossible therefore as it is that Christ in his righteousness should not please, so vnpossible is it that we should not please by our faith whereby we cleaue to his righteousness. Whereby it commeth to passe that a Christian is omnipotent, Lord of all, possessing all thinges, doing all thinges, wholly without any sinne. And although it so be that he haue sinnes, yet can it not be that they should hurt him, but they are remitted because of his inuincible righteousness of Christ which swalloweth vp all sinnes, whereunto our faith trusteth, firmly beleuing that Christ is such a one vnto vs, as we saye. For he that doth not beleue that, heareth in vaine, acknowledgeth not Christ, neither knoweth whereunto he profiteth or serueth.

Wherefore euen this one consideration, if there were no other, may minister vnto vs so much comfort, if it be well and duely had, that we may not onely not be grieved at our euils, but also reioyce in tri-

*A Christian is said to be without sinne, not in respect of the action of sinne, but inas-
much as sinne is not imputed to him for Christes sake.*

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bulations, scarce feeling them by reason of
the ioy which we haue in Christ. Of which
ioy our Christ our Lorde and God blessed
for ever make vs partakers, Amen.

*The con-
clusion.*

By these my cogitations most famous
Prince, witnessing after a sort the duety of
my small abilitie, I commende me to your
most noble grace, being ready to performe
greater thinges, if the power of my spirit
were according to my desire. For I will
alwayes be a dettour both to euery of my
neighbours, but especially to your most
noble Grace, whom our Lord Je-
sus Christ by his gracious good-
nes long preserue among vs,
& at the last bring to him
selfe by a blessed and
happye ende,
Amen.

Your Graces most humble and
obedient subiect MARTIN LV-
THER.

